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ABSTRACT

This student-oriented instructional booklet provides strategies for students for notebook organization, time management, note-taking, reading and highlighting assignments, homework completion, and test-taking. The booklet's first section, "Preparing for Classes," offers tips for keeping a notebook, an assignment sheet, a calendar, a daily and weekly time schedule, and suggestions for school supplies. Three reproducible assignment sheet formats and a form for listing and prioritizing "Things to Do Today" are also provided. The second section, "During Classes," suggests active-learning behaviors and teacher-pleasing classroom behaviors; presents techniques for taking clear, comprehensive lecture notes; and includes a reproducible form for note-taking. The third section, "After Classes--Homework," presents 15 recommendations for successfully completing homework. This section presents the SQ3R approach (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) to studying textbooks and gives pointers for critically reading and marking materials. The last section, "Test-Taking," offers strategies for studying for, and answering, four types of objective test questions (multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank) and two types of subjective test questions (short answer and essay). (Author/JDD)

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TIPS FOR BEING A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT

A Handbook for Students and Teachers

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TIPS FOR EING A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT: A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

"Tips for Being a Successful Student" is a 30-page, student-oriented instructional booklet which is designed for both teachers and students. The intent of the booklet is to provide strategies for students for notebook organization, time management, note-taking, reading and highlighting assignments, homework completion, and taking teacher-made tests. The author envisioned the booklet being utilized by able students independent of teacher instruction, or serving as the basis for teacher-directed instruction for other students.

The booklet contains tips for 4 major areas - namely, Preparing for Classes, During Classes, After Classes, and Test-Taking. In the first section, the material offers suggestions for being prepared and organized for classes. The material presents tips for keeping a notebook, an assignment sheet, a calendar, and a daily and weekly time schedule, along with suggestions for school supplies which will aid studying. Three reproducible assignment sheet formats and a form for listing and prioritizing "Things To Do Today," all designed to help with time management, are also provided. The second section, During Classes, suggests both active-learner and teacher-pleasing classroom behaviors and suggests techniques for taking clear, comprehensive lecture notes. The booklet also contains a reproducible form for note-taking during classes. The third section, After Classes, presents 15 recommendations for successfully completing homework. This section also succinctly, in student vocabulary, presents the SQ3R approach to reading a textbook and gives pointers for critically reading and marking an article or a chapter from a textbook. The last section of this student resource, Taking Tests, suggests strategies for studying for, and answering, the 4 types of objective test questions (multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the blanks) and the 2 types of subjective test questions (short answer and essay).

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Tips for Being a Successful Student

I. Preparing for Classes

1. Buy necessary school supplies
   - 3 ring notebook
   - lined notebook paper
   - dividers for each class
   - pencils
   - pens - with blue or black ink
   - highlighter(s) - 2 or 3 different colors
   - assignment notebook
   - plastic pencil case
2. Organize your 3-ring notebook
   - label a divider for each class
   - put notebook paper in each section
   - keep assignment sheet or notebook in front of notebook or each class section
   - keep writing tools in front of notebook (in plastic case)
3. Keep an assignment sheet or notebook
   - check it everyday before you go home - get the books you need
     - if you don't have a written assignment, review or read ahead
     - if you aren't clear on your assignment, find your teacher and ask
4. Keep a calendar - weekly and monthly
   - write due date of assignments and papers
   - write dates of tests
   - write date of holidays and personal obligations
   - write time for studying
   - write due dates for partial assignments
   - make daily lists of things you must accomplish that day
5. Keep a regular homework/study schedule

Week of _____

Assignment Sheet

Assignment	Class	Date Assigned	Date Due	Date Completed
Chapter 20, Part 3 pp. 28-30	U.S. History II	11/19	11/20	11/19

Week of _____

Assignment Sheet

Date Assigned	Class	Assignment	Date Due	Date Completed
11/21	English	Read Chapter 1 The Red Pony	11/22	

Day _____

Date _____

Assignment Sheet

Period	Class	Assignment	Date Due	Date Completed
1	U.S. History II			
2	Computer Applications			
3				
4				
5				
6	Oral Communications			
7	Algebra 1A			
8	Biology A			

WHY MAKE A TIME SCHEDULE?

1. Parents will "get off your case" when they see that you have planned your study time. As they observe you becoming more responsible, they may gradually stop checking on what you are doing.

2. Writing down what you must do each day relieves your mind so you can think more effectively when you study.

3. You will be less likely to put off your work, or procrastinate, if you have a set time to begin.

4. When you set a certain amount of time to do each assignment, your concentration will improve.

5. With a schedule, you are less likely to let a ten-minute break extend into the rest of the evening. Gradually, you will learn to discipline yourself so you can get your work done and then relax.

6. You will experience a feeling of satisfaction when you know what to do when.

7. Following a schedule will help you come to class prepared. You will then learn more because the class presentation or activity will have more meaning. As a result, your grades will improve.

Source:
Bragstad, B.J., & Stumpf, S.M. A Guidebook for Teaching Study Skills and Motivation. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1982, p. 200.

Week of _____

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Period	A.M.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1st	7:30-8:30							
2nd	8:30-9:30							
3rd	9:30-10:15							
4th	10:15-11:00							
5th	11:00-11:45							
	P.M.							
6th	11:45-12:30							
7th	12:30-1:30							
8th	1:30-2:15							
	END OF SCHOOL DAY							
	2:15-3:00							
	3:00-4:00							
	4:00-5:00							
	5:00-6:00							
	6:00-7:00							
	7:00-8:00							
	8:00-9:00							
	9:00-10:00							

THINGS TO DO TODAY

DAY _____ DATE _____

Priority	Task	Completed
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		

Tips for Being a Successful Student

II. During Classes

1. Attend - daily

2. Be on time

3. Be prepared - come with book, homework, notebook, paper, and pencil

4. Be ready to work when the bell rings - have your book open, homework ready to be checked

5. Sit in the front third of the room, near the center

6. Be an active learner

   - look at and listen to the teacher - respond to him/her - For example, nod, smile
   - don't daydream, look around at classmates, out the window, door, etc.
   - listen for main ideas and signal words
   - ask questions
   - take part in discussions

7. Take notes

   - Use notetaking paper or notebook paper with a section for key words and a section for main ideas
   - Label each day's notes with class, date, and topic
   - Write down any brief outline that is on the board
   - Listen for the teacher's signal words, e.g., "This is important . . ." "Be sure to know . . ." "I'm going to ask you this . . ." "You'll see this again . . ." "This will be on the test . . ."
   - Listen for dates, places, people's names
   - Write key words and main ideas
   - Use abbreviations and shorthand

e.g. = for example	b/c = because
i.e. = that is	#s = numbers
w/o = without	p = page
w = with	ch = chapter
∴ = therefore	≈ = about, approximately
lk = like	ex = example

Tips for Being a Successful Student

- Use symbols to call attention to important words

  underline, CAPS, (circle), [box], *, !, ✓, →

- When the instructor says, this is important, get it exactly and

  * [MARK IT] ←

- Don't erase a mistake; draw a single line through it. This saves time and you may want it later.

- Leave space _____ when the teacher goes too fast, raise your hand, ask teacher to repeat.

- Put large question marks in the margin when you miss a point or do not understand it. Ask the teacher to re-explain.

8. Review your notes immediately after class/school.

   - Are they readable? Write out abbreviations, illegible words, unfinished sentences.

   - Are they clear? Add comments to clarify your notes. Fill in details, add examples, restate ideas. Underline or otherwise mark before important points for emphasis.

   - Add a summary

9. File your notes in your notebook - by class, chronologically.

10. Immediately after class, make an appointment with the teacher for extra help on anything you didn't understand.

CLASS _____ 10

PERIOD _____

DATE _____

TOPIC _____

SOURCE _____

Notetaking Paper

KEY WORDS	NOTES

Tips for Being a Successful Student

III. After Classes - Homework

1. Set aside a time every day for every subject.

2. Decide how much time you will need for each course. Put that amount of time into your daily schedule and stick to it. If you haven't finished the assignment in the amount of time you allotted, go on to the next subject. After you have worked on all your assignments, go back and complete any assignments you did not finish.

3. Begin with your hardest subject. Save the easiest subject until last. Make an outline of what needs to be done for big projects. Study when you're most alert. Afternoons may be better than evenings. Set a stopping time every night - for example, no later than 10 p.m.

4. Work for a set time on one thing - 40 minutes is best. Then take a 5 minute break. Don't do 2 or 3 assignments at the same time.

5. Have all the materials you need with you - assignment sheet(s), notebook, book(s), paper, pencil, holepuncher, calendar, ruler, scissors, dictionary and other reference books.

6. Pick a comfortable, quiet place to study - no radio, TV, stereo, toys, people. Use the same place every day. Assure you have adequate lighting and space, as well as a proper writing surface (desk/table).

7. Don't allow interruptions - telephone calls, visitors, chores.

8. Concentrate while you are working. Focus your attention on what you want to remember. Don't daydream, get a snack, take a nap, or think about personal problems.

9. Be active with the material. Write it, underline key words, circle main ideas, make marks on your notes and papers. Recite it to yourself or aloud so you can hear it.

10. Date and label your homework - for example, U.S. History II, Ch. 23, Ex. 1-3, 11/20/87.

11. File your homework in your notebook. Have it ready for the teacher to check at the beginning of class tomorrow.

12. Every night review the day's notes for each class. Make sure they are readable and clear. Add a summary.

13. Every night, review for at least 10 minutes for each course. Incorporate new material with previous material; make connections and associations in your mind.

14. Before you go to bed, review your assignment sheet and make sure you've done all your homework.

15. For any assignment with which you had trouble, see your teacher first thing in the morning. Ask questions.

SQ3R: AN APPROACH TO READING YOUR TEXTBOOK

SQ3R is a 5-step process for reading your textbook. The 5 steps are Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. Try it. I think it will work.

1. Survey. - Survey the chapter to get an idea about the chapter's organization and the information in it. Survey using these 5 steps.

- Read the title of the chapter. Think about what you already know about this topic.

- Read the first paragraph. Here you may find the author's plan of organization for the chapter. The introduction usually states the topics included in the chapter as well as the author's purpose for writing it.

- Read the section headings in the chapter. These are the main topics or concepts that have been developed by the author. How many major divisions do you find? Are there any subdivisions within this structure?

- Look at the illustrations and their captions. What ideas are presented or clarified by charts, graphs, maps, or tables?

- Read the last paragraph or the summary. Here you usually find a review of the main concepts or final conclusions.

2. Question. Questions structure your thinking and aid understanding. Make questions as you read.

- Phrase main headings and subheadings as questions.

- Write down questions that occur to you while you survey the chapter.

- Compare your questions with those at the end of the chapter.

3. Read. Read the chapter, section by section.

4. Recite. At the end of each section, look away from the book for a few seconds and recite what you've just read. Record the main ideas on your paper and associate the new ideas with previously learned material. Don't hesitate to recite aloud. Hearing yourself paraphrase the ideas will help put the information into long-term memory. Then check your recall against the book. Reciting is a crucial step for remembering!

5. Review. After you've read the material - section by section - you're ready to look at the total chapter so you can see all the parts in relationship to each other. This total review is the final step for organizing the information to understand and remember it.

Source:
Bragstad, B.J., & Stumpf, S.M. A Guidebook for Teaching Study Skills and Motivation. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1982, pp. 218-219.

Tips for Reading a Textbook

Within each chapter of a textbook, there are many signs and signals to help you find the main ideas. Numbers, letters, words, phrases, and special typographic devices such as italics, boldface print, and underlining are all used to direct your attention to important points. Listed below are some examples of signs and signals used by many authors to help you find the main ideas in the chapter.

1. The numbers 1, 2, 3 . . ., or the words, first, second, third, alert you that a list is coming and that you should mark or circle the information. Often these lists are introduced by phrases like "there were three major causes of World War II . . ."

2. Words such as "and," "more," "moreover," "more than that," "furthermore," "also," and "likewise," are signals to help you find important points. The most frequently used of these is the word "and." It signals that an item of equal importance is coming or that the information to be presented is the last item in a series of items. For example, "The last three presidents were Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan."

The words "more," "moreover," "more than that," and "furthermore," all signal new, and perhaps stronger thoughts along the same idea. For example, "He's clever, all right; more than that, he's a genius." The signal, more than that, reinforces the preceding point while adding to it.

The signals also and likewise mean "in addition to." For example, "Along with signals, authors also use signs.

3. Words such as "but," "yet," "nevertheless," "otherwise," "although," "despite," "in spite of," "not," "on the contrary," and "however," signal an idea different from the preceding idea. For example, "I thought they knew that information; however, their tests indicated otherwise."

4. Words such as "thus," "therefore," "consequently," and "accordingly," signal that an idea is continuing as well as signaling a summary, result, or a consequence of the action. For example, "Thus, after years of teaching study skills to students, it appears their skills are improving."

5. Words and phrases such as "finally," "as a result," and "in conclusion" signal that a last or final thought or a summary is being presented. For example, "Finally, study skills can be taught to students, but in order for grades to improve, the students must use what is taught to them."

6. The use of boldface type or italics is used make certain words stand out. Boldface type is frequently used for headings and subheadings. Italics are often used for definitions or long quotations. Boxes, indentations of margins, and color changes are also used to signal important information.

Source:
Bragstad, B.J., & Stumpf, S.M. A Guidebook for Teaching Study Skills and Motivation. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1982, pp. 220-223.

Tips for Marking an Article or a Book

How to go about Marking

1. Develop a Personal Code. Experiment with various symbols, then choose on one style that makes sense to you. For example, if underlining with an asterisk in the margin indicates the ultimate in importance to you, then let that be your code for major concepts.

2. Read First. Get "the big picture" - read an entire subheading (or several paragraphs in an article without headings) before deciding what is important to mark.

3. Select. Marking is not intended to be a long, tedious process. Rather, quickly "weigh" the thoughts in an entire section and promptly mark the most significant ones.

4. Make Marginal Notes. Even marking a book can be deceiving: when done mindlessly, it won't be a study aid. Therefore, as an incentive to read attentively and critically, write notes in the margins of your study sources. These notes might include (1) facts, in your own words if possible; (2) your personal reaction to the content; (3) the major concepts, particularly for articles with no headings.

Applying new skills always feels uncomfortable at first, but persevere. Marking becomes easier and faster with practice, and, linked with study and review, you'll enjoy the results.

A Sample Marking System

No, there is no one right system for marking a book, only various alternatives for you to try. One sample marking method follows. Perhaps it can aid you in developing your own marking style.

Content Concerns:

Thesis statement: ☐

Major concepts: ~~~~~~~~~~~~

Significant details: _____ with a, b, c.

Introduction to a series: _____

Items in a series: Underline and number them within the text.

Transition words, phrases: ( )

New vocabulary, key terms: (term) = definition

Long, important passages: [ ] in margin

Marginal Notes: Keep them brief, legible.

Your personal strong agreement with text: Yes! or

Your personal strong disagreement with text: No! or

Confused on this point: ?

Especially important material: *

Abbreviations: whatever you decide

Use one color of ink to mark during your first reading, then a second color during review. Magic markers are excellent for highlighting major concepts, the keys to remembering.

Source:
Bragstad, B.J., & Stumpf, S.M. A Guidebook for Teaching Study Skills and Motivation. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1982, pp. 231-233.

Tips for Being a Successful Student

IV. Test-Taking

Test-taking is a very important study skill which you can learn with a little instruction and practice. There are strategies for taking both objective (multiple choice, true-false, fill in the blanks or completion, and matching) and subjective (short answer and essay) type tests. These strategies will help you do well on these tests.

First of all, it is important that you study each night, rather than cram for a test. It is also important that you get a good night's sleep before a test.

Listed below are strategies for taking each type of test. Try them. I think they'll help you.

Strategy for Answering Multiple Choice Questions

1. Read the stem (main question).
2. Read each answer or choice (alternative).
3. Reread the stem. Identify key words.

   Key words are usually nouns (people, places, things, dates).
4. Reread each answer using the process of elimination - that is, eliminate obviously incorrect responses. Employ your knowledge of clues.
5. Choose the correct answer.

Test-Taking Tips for Answering Multiple Choice Test Questions

When answering a multiple choice question, read carefully all possible choices and eliminate obviously incorrect responses. If it is still difficult to determine the correct response, the following clues may guide you to the best choice.

1. Length Clue - Correct responses may be longer than incorrect responses.

   Example:

   The cell membrane or boundary performs which of the following jobs for the cell?

   A. control of cell reproduction

   B. storage of good and gases

   C. selective control of the passage of some materials into and out of the cell.

   D. production of chlorophyll

2. Similar Option Clue - Eliminate similar options, that is, choices which imply the same response.

   Example:

   In the question $3x + 2 = 5$, solve for x.

   A. 1.5

   B. 1

   C. 3/2

   D. 2

3. Similar Word Clue - Select the response that resembles part of the lead-in statement or question stem.

   Example:

   The adjustment which controls the vertical roll of the T.V. picture is the

   A. horizontal hold

   B. brightness control

   C. contrast control

   D. vertical hold

4. All or None Clue - Eliminate choices that include words such as "all," "none," "never," "always," "no," "every," etc.

   Example:

   Cities in the southwestern part of the United States

   A. Usually receive 0 to 10 inches of rainfall per year

   B. Never receive more than 5 inches of rainfall per year

   C. Always receive at least 5 inches of rainfall per year

   D. Never receive any rain

5. Non-Verb Clue - Eliminate choices in which the noun and verb are not in agreement.

   Example:

   Among the major cities of Europe are

   A. Peking

   B. Prague and Berlin

   C. Palestine

   D. Cairo

6. "A" or "An" Clue - Eliminate responses in which a word beginning with a consonant or vowel is not proceeded by the correct article, "a" or "an."

   Example:

   Galileo could be best described as an

   A. physicist

   B. biologist

   C. astronomer

   D. mathematician

7. "Give-Away" Clue - Quite often the answer to one item is given in another part of the test.

   Example: The part of a living cell which serves as a boundary is the

   A. nucleus

   B. vacuole

   C. cell membrane

   D. cytoplasm

8. "No Clue Clue" - When personal knowledge and all other methods do not provide a clue to the correct response, select "B". Research has shown that "B" is most often selected as the correct response by test makers.

Strategy for Answering True-False Questions

If one part of the question is false, the entire question is false. For example:

George Washington was the 16th president of the United States is false.

George Washington was the 1st president of the United States; Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president.

Strategy for Answering Matching Test Questions

Matching test questions have 2 columns, A and B, or 1 and 2. The purpose is to match words, terms, concepts, dates, and definitions correctly.

The strategy for answering matching test questions is as follows:

1. Read the directions.
2. Read the answers in Column A.
3. Read the answers in Column B.
4. Categorize or label each column - e.g., Column A is a date; Column B is an event.
5. Define the task - e.g., match the date with the event.
6. Match Column A with Column B.
7. Read the columns together - i.e., put the words into a sentence. For example, "The 14th amendment was ratified in 1868."
8. Ask yourself - Does the sentence make sense and is it correct? If the answer is "yes" to both questions, you have probably matched the columns correctly. If the answer is "no" to either question, you need to redo the process and select a different answer.

Strategy for Answering Fill in the Blanks or Completion Questions

Write the one correct answer in the blank or blanks.

Strategy for Answering Short Answer Test Questions

Words which indicate short answer questions are the following:

1. Name
2. List
3. Identify
4. Give
5. Mention
6. State
7. Give the principle of

When you see the words name, list, mention, or give, you should simply list what is requested. No sentences are required. For example,

List the 3 necessities of life.

1. food
2. clothing
3. shelter

The word "list" could have been "name," "identify," "give," or "mention."

"State." When you see this word, you should simply describe, define, or point out the requested information. No discussion is necessary; a single sentence or brief list is adequate.

For example, "State the beginning of World War I" could be answered with a single sentence such as "World War I began when Archduke Francis Ferdinand and Sophie were shot by a man from Serbia in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia."

"Give the principle of." When you see this phrase, simply provide the law, rule, or principle requested. An example may be used tosupport your answer.

For example, Give the principle of flotation.

Answer: Materials lighter than water float; materials heavier than water sink.

Strategy for Answering Essay Questions

1. Look over all the essay questions. Look for the direction words/phrases in each question. If you have a choice of which question(s) to answer, decide which to answer and your order for answering them.
2. Schedule time for each question. If different numbers of points are assigned to different questions, devote an appropriate amount of time to each question. If the same number of points is allocated for each question, start with the question(s) on which you expect to do well. Otherwise, answer the question(s) worth the most points first.
3. Prepare a brief outline for each question. Approximately one-third of the time spent answering an essay question should be set aside for developing an outline and for final proofreading. For example, if you plan to spend 15 minutes on an essay question, devote about three minutes to outlining, and about two minutes to proofreading your answer.
4. Begin the essay with a restatement of the question.
5. Use short sentences, paragraphs.
6. Use subject matter vocabulary.
7. Emphasize points stressed by the teacher.
8. Use pictures and diagrams when appropriate.
9. Leave space between lines and margins on the top, sides, and bottom of the paper.
10. Use ink instead of pencil.
11. Do not repeat information.

Strategy for Answering Essay Questions

Page 2

12. Do not pad - that is, add extra, unnecessary information.

13. Conclude with a summary statement.

14. Proofread the essay for such things as gross errors, awkward usage.

Source: Helping Students Do Better On Tests, Section II. Rockville, Maryland: Montgomery County Public Schools, August, 1975, pages 12-14.

Preparing for Essay Tests

Direction words used in essay questions may be organized into 5 groups, each requiring different abilities. Listed below are the most commonly used direction words by group, with the abilities needed for answering, and suggestions for preparing for essay questions using the direction words.

Direction Words	Abilities Needed	Suggested Preparation
Name State Give principle of	Simple recall	Memorize key vocabulary. Memorize key concepts.
Outline Trace Summarize	Complex recall	Organize events according to cause and effect in chronological order.
Give examples of	Translation of technical language Application of principle	Put principles, concepts in own words. Apply principles to events in own life, draw examples from own experience.
Compare Contrast	Analysis of similarities, differences	Organize information into categories or classes such as "same," "different," or "unrelated."
Interpret Discuss Comment Criticize, evaluate	Draw conclusions Integrate information Make judgments	Do all of the above, then make judgments, evaluations.

Source: Helping Students Do Better on Tests, Section II. Rockville, Maryland: Montgomery County Public Schools, August, 1975, pages 12-14.

Understanding Words Used in Essay Questions

Listed below are the 12 different words or phrases used most often in essay questions with suggestions for responding to questions with these words or phrases.

Direction Word/Phrase	Suggested Responses
1. Outline	Arrange information in outline form; the simple rules of outlining apply.
2. Trace	Give events in the order in which they occurred. Present major points and cause and effect relationships.
3. Summarize; give the significance of	Present both major points and generally accepted conclusions or outcomes. Your opinions about a matter usually are not required. However, your teacher expects you to apply the principles and concepts stressed in class.
4. Give examples of; illustrate	Give instances of, or sample occurrences; usually a simple list will do. These terms usually do not mean "draw a picture."
5. Put in your own words	Translate technical, literary, or other special language into your words. In some cases, diagrams, charts, or graphs may be used to respond to this direction phrase.

Understanding Words Used in Essay Questions

6.	Identify, explain, describe, show, prove, define	Give the pertinent characteristics of events, classes, principles, or groups. The question is asking you to distinguish a particular event, class, item, happening, etc., from some other.
7.	Compare	Give both similarities and differences. Be sure to itemize similarities and differences in such comparisons.
8.	Contrast, distinguish	Show differences between two events, theories, entities.
9.	Interpret	Give your own meaning and conclusions about the meaning of a quotation, event, theory, etc. Relate cause and effect.
10.	Discuss	Tell all you can about the topic in the time available.
11.	Comment	State your reaction to the topic. Support your opinion with facts or illustrations.
12.	Criticize, evaluate	Give evidence on both sides of an issue; draw conclusions from this evidence; and finally, make a judgment as to the relative worth, quality, or value of the topic in question.

Source: Helping Students Do Better on Tests, Section II. Rockville, Maryland: Montgomery County Public Schools, August, 1975, pages 10-11.

A Checklist for Your Essay

After writing your answer to an essay question, use the checklist below to check your response.

	YES	NO
1. Does your essay speak to the question?	_____	_____
2. Is there a clear topic sentence within an introductory paragraph?	_____	_____
3. Have you presented specific facts and examples to support your main idea?	_____	_____
4. Have you used smooth transitions between paragraphs?	_____	_____
5. Have you presented a clear concluding statement or paragraph consistent with your main idea?	_____	_____
6. Is your handwriting legible?	_____	_____

Source:
Bragstad, B.J., & Stumpf, S.M. A Guidebook for Teaching Study Skills and Motivation. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1982, p. 300.

Steps in Preparing for Tests

1. Ask your teacher what types of questions will be on the test.

2. Read your note-taking papers.

3. Review your study guides.

4. Make up and answer practice test questions for each type of test question.

5. Tell someone else what you have learned - i.e., rehearse and summarize the information.

6. Reread your notes and practice test questions on the morning of the test.

General Strategy for Taking Tests

1. Put your name and date on each page of the test.
2. Ask the teacher how much time you have to take the test.
3. Look through the entire test to see the types of questions on the test and how many of each type.
4. Ask the teacher the point value of each question.
5. Plan your test-taking strategy - i.e., which questions will you answer first, second, third, etc.
6. Estimate the time you will need for each question and section of the test.
7. Read the directions for each section carefully and do exactly as the directions state.
8. Answer the easiest questions and the questions with the most point value first.
9. If you do not understand a specific question, ask for further clarification.
10. Consider all possible answers to a question before selecting your response.
11. If there is no penalty for guessing, guess only after an honest attempt has been made to answer the question.
12. Do not spend too much time on difficult questions; answer the questions to which you know the answer first. If you skip a question, mark the question so you can return to it.
13. Mark all answers clearly and neatly.
14. Check over your answers.
15. Change an answer only if you are certain your first answer was incorrect.
16. Be confident.

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